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A21WX (EGYPTIAN)
WITH CAIRO U.S.-EGYPT AS3

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WASHINGTON, JULY 23 (AP) THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN FIRMLY DENIED TODAY ACCUSATIONS THAT AMERICAN DIPLOMAT BRUCE TAYLOR ODELL IS A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OPERATIVE SPYING FOR THE UNITED STATES IN CAIRO.

"HE (ODELL) WAS A POLITICAL OFFICER, AN ATTACHE WITH THE EMBASSY, AND STILL IS," PRESS OFFICER MARSHALL WRIGHT TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE.

AT THE SAME TIME, WRIGHT DENIED A CHARGE BY UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDEL NASSER, MADE IN A CAIRO SPEECH YESTERDAY, THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS MADE "ASTONISHING" DEMANDS IN RETURN FOR U.S. AID.

ALL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AMERICAN AND U.A.R. OFFICIALS "FALL IN THE NORMAL RANGE OF OUR BILATERAL AND AREA INTERESTS," WRIGHT SAID.

ODELL WAS ACCUSED BY THE UAR'S OFFICIAL PRESS AGENCY OF WORKING FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY "UNDER THE GUISE OF AN ATTACHE." THE CHARGE WAS MADE WHEN MUSTAFA AMIN, A NEWSPAPER EDITOR, WAS ARRESTED JULY 21 IN ODELL'S PRESENCE.

THE MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY SAID THAT AMIN HAD BEEN CAUGHT BY THE POLICE "WHILE GIVING A WEEKLY REPORT AT THE REQUEST OF THE CIA" TO ODELL.

WHITE SAID:

"VERY MANY U.S. DIPLOMATS AND CITIZENS KNOW AMIN . . . AN INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN PUBLISHER AND JOURNALIST. IT IS COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE AND NORMAL THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH A PERSON OF MR. AMIN'S REPUTATION. CONTACTS BETWEEN AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND MR. AMIN HAD BEEN ENTIRELY OPEN AND ABOVEBOARD."

CONCERNING THE EGYPTIAN VERSION WHICH SAID THAT AMIN WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED WHILE HANDING SOME DOCUMENTS TO ODELL, WHITE SAID THAT "NO DOCUMENTS WHATSOEVER WERE EXCHANGED."

WRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT ODELL "HAD UPON HIS PERSON" SOME HAND-WRITTEN NOTES THE DIPLOMAT HAD TAKEN EARLIER. HE SAID ODELL WAS SEARCHED AND HIS NOTES WERE PRESUMABLY TAKEN FROM HIM.

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